

there being a large number employed in running the rapids there, and it was only during a short time in every twelve hours when, owing to the state of the tide, the stream and the falls were very nearly level, that boats could pass the falls. While this improvement would not cost much it would be of great service to boatmen.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT promised to bring the matter under the notice of the Commissioner of Public Works.

#### SECTIONS FOUR AND SEVEN, INTER-COLONIAL.

Hon. Mr. McLELLAN in moving for a return of the unpaid claims for labor on these sections, said: It is in the recollection of honorable gentlemen that there has already been some discussion on these claims here and in the other branch. From the report of that discussion it will be seen that the Premier in answer to Dr. Tupper's enquiry for the reasons why those claims were not paid, stated that he had been told that the claims were nearly all in the hands of third parties bought up at a large discount, and a number of them so held by one of the Commissioners. I knew such reports had been conveyed to the Government, and now that they have thus been made public I desire to say, publicly, that they are entirely incorrect and unfounded. But whilst I have never speculated in the paid or unpaid claims, I have had considerable to do with them. Early in 1869, seven sections of the Intercolonial were given to contractors before, as it has been on many occasions stated, the engineers had perfected a full survey. Work on sections four and seven in Nova Scotia—the Province I was more directly connected with on the Commission—commenced in June. Very little money was paid the laborers, except in July and August. Late in November, work on both sections stopped, throwing over a thousand workmen out of employment, from two to three months unpaid, and many of them without the means of procuring the necessaries of life. The condition of the men was such that great fears were entertained of serious disturbances. I was suddenly called to deal with these difficulties, and any gentleman who has had similar experience, will appreciate the trials and anxieties of the position. There was a sum in the hands of the Commissioners: per centage retained from contractors and the last estimate of work. Under the contract we reserved the power to apply this to the payment of labour. Unfortunately it fell very far short of meeting all the

claims, and I could only attempt to divide it equitably among the men. This was done as far as possible, but with great difficulty, and not without personal danger to myself and those who assisted me. The hon. member from Cumberland may, perhaps, recollect one occasion when a partial payment of fifty cents on the dollar was being made, an exasperated navy drew his knife with his bill and demanded to have payment in full, or a Commissioner. (Laughter.) This partial payment I marked on the due bill or time ticket which the men held and returned it to them. Some time after this, the impression became pretty general in that section of country that the hardship to those laborers was so great that the Commissioners wanted to pay the balance. The consequence was, that I was continually beset by the claimants, and between '69 and '72 a great many of the claims were sent to me by the claimants scattered over Cumberland, Colchester and Pictou, instructed, as many of them stated, to do so by their representative. The contractors on all those sections from one to seven, were also pressing for some consideration of their exceptional position. The Commissioners when the work on their sections was nearly completed under the second contracts, discussed the matter very fully, and seeing that the work on five of the sections had been re-let, after fuller engineering enquiry, and the lowest available tenders taken, concluded with the concurrence of the engineer-in-chief, that it would be no more than justice to allow these men a price for the work actually executed by them, approaching the prices paid under the re-let contract. This was recommended to Council, with a sum named for each; the recommendation was sanctioned, all arrears connected with labor on the section to be first paid. Competent persons were accordingly directed to ascertain what claims were outstanding. Mr. Schrieber being named for sections four and seven, and all the papers in my possession bearing on the claims, were handed over to him. He reported the claims presented to him, the amount, nature of it, and the person presenting claim—returning by mail to me most of the papers I had given him. In the session of '73 the House authorized the payment of the several sums to each contractor subject to claims connected with labor. Mr. Schrieber was again called upon to examine into those on four and seven, which he did with the aid of the contractors interested. Such of the papers as remained with me were again